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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: RUMORS FLY ABOUT POSSIBLE PM DISMISSAL

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (U) Guinea's rumor mill was working overtime yesterday as people throughout the capital speculated about the possibly imminent dismissal of Prime Minister Ahmed Tidiane Souare. By late afternoon, numerous government contacts were confirming the rumors and anticipating an official announcement during the 8:00 PM news broadcast on the state-owned Radio Television Guinean (RTG). Sources indicated that a former minister of finance, Kassory Fofana, would be named as the new prime minister. Despite the "confirmed" rumors, the Minister of Information and Communication, Tibou Kamara, appeared on the evening news and dismissed the rumors as unfounded speculation.

¶2. (C) Speculation continues today in the internet press as reporters question the reasons behind the rumor, who may have started it, and for what purpose. The Minister of Territorial Administration and Political Affairs told the Charge in a meeting yesterday that the Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) political party, which is considered predominately Malinke, was responsible for starting the rumor (septel). Another contact suggested that the former Secretary General of the Presidency, Sam Soumah, may have been responsible.

¶3. (C) Despite the GoG's claim that there is nothing behind the rumor, Prime Minister Souare's office called the Embassy yesterday to cancel a critical meeting that had been scheduled for Thursday between the PM, the Charge, and the President of Sierra Leone (septel). No reasons were given for the cancellation, nor was there any offer to reschedule.

COMMENT

¶4. (C) How much truth is behind the rumors is unclear, but contacts have been quietly talking about the possibility of Souare's replacement by Fofana for several weeks. Increasingly seen as the person with the most influence within the presidency, some contacts believe that Fofana may have been the president's first choice for PM when he fired former PM Kouyate. However, Fofana's past performance as finance minister and his reputation for corruption make him a controversial choice.

¶5. (C) Fofana is considered a close friend of the new Minister Secretary General of the Presidency, Alpha Ibrahima Keira, as well as the president's second wife, Kadiatou Set. Fofana is believed to have played a key role in the power plays behind the scenes that brought about Kouyate's dismissal. He remains a key influential personality, and one that could conceivably take on a much more public position in the months ahead. Interestingly, one of the Embassy drivers, who was waiting outside a restaurant yesterday, saw Fofana drive up to the same restaurant in a vehicle with ministerial plates, accompanied by members of the presidential guard. He

was reportedly escorting a Senegalese delegation. Since he does not have an official GoG post, it is curious that he was driving around in a ministerial vehicle. END CO
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